

U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES, PACIFIC

SPECIAL EMPHASIS OBSERVATION NEWSLETTER

May 2017



Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Title 36, U.S. Code, Section 102



The history behind the Special Observance...

May is Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month - a celebration of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. Asian/Pacific encompasses all of the Asian continent and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and the Federated States of Micronesia) and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia and Easter Island).

The month of May was chosen for the Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month because of two important dates in the middle of the month. On the seventh of May in 1843, the first Japanese immigrant traveled to the United States. On the tenth in 1869, the transcontinental railroad was completed. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.

In 1977 Reps. Frank Horton of New York introduced House Joint Resolution 540 to proclaim the first ten days in May as Pacific/Asian American Heritage Week. That same year, Senator Daniel Inouye introduced a similar resolution. Neither of these resolutions passed. In June 1978, Rep. Horton introduced House Joint Resolution 1007. This resolution proposed that the President "proclaim a week, which is to include the seventh and tenth of the month, during the first ten days in May of 1979 as 'Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week.'" This joint resolution was passed by the House and Senate and signed by President Jimmy Carter on October 5, 1978 to become Public Law 95-419. This law amended the original language of the bill and directed the President to issue a proclamation for the "7 day period beginning on May 4, 1979 as 'Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week.'" During the next decade, presidents passed annual proclamations for Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week until 1990 when Congress passed Public Law 101-283 which expanded the observance to a month for 1990. Then in 1992, Congress passed Public Law 102-450 which annually designated May as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. Annually every U.S. President has issued a proclamation designating the month of May as the Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

To read the most recent Presidential Proclamation for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month visit the link below:

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/29/presidential-proclamation-asian-american-and-pacific-islander-heritage>



And how it's affected our Corps...

To date the Corps has 6,206 Active duty members that identify as either Asian or Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*. Here are several Marines of Asian or Pacific Islander heritage that have enriched our Corps.



One of the Corp's most notable Marines of Asian descent was Major Kurt Chew-Een Lee. Major Lee was the first Asian American Marine Corps Officer. Major Lee fought in three major conflicts; World War II, Korean War, and the Vietnam War. In the Korean War he was crucial in securing an escape route from the Chosin Reservoir for his fellow service members. Major Lee's awards include the Navy Cross.



A Marine of Asian heritage is Brigadier General David Yoo. Brigadier General Yoo received his commission in March of 1985 as an Infantry Officer. Some of Brigadier General Yoos' commands and billets include Commanding General of MCRD San Diego, command of the 4th Marine Regiment, 3d Marine Division, and Camp Schwab, Okinawa, Japan and as the Coalition Commander in Southwestern Afghanistan. Brigadier General Yoos' awards include the Legion of Merit.



SgtMaj Angela M. Maness is of Polynesian heritage. SgtMaj Maness enlisted in June of 1987 and graduated as the Honor Guard for her platoon. Making the rank of Sgt in under three years SgtMaj Maness would volunteer for Drill Instructor Duty. SgtMaj Maness would make multiple deployments to Afghanistan before returning to Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, SC to serve as the Depot's first female SgtMaj in 2013. SgtMaj Maness' awards include the Legion of Merit.

For more information in the National Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month visit the below websites.

<http://smithsonianapa.org/>



Our Nation's story would be incomplete without the voices of countless Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who call the land we all love home. This month, we honor the irreplaceable roles they have played in our past, and we recommit to ensuring opportunities exist for generations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to come.

Lieutenant General D. H. Berger
COMMANDER
U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES, PACIFIC



There is no question that the true strength of our nation is her people. The diversity and differences within our country don't divide us, they actually bring us together. As we take time to recognize and honor National Asian American and Pacific Islander heritage month, I can't help but remember a few great Marines....

In 1950, he led five hundred Marines through a blizzard to save eight thousand more from certain capture. But his greatest victory may have been changing the way our country regards Asian Americans. Meet Lt. Chew-Een Lee, whose patriotism and bravery ushered in a new era in the Marines...and in America.

Or a present day Marine who uses his love and passion for rugby to build and unify his community...no matter where he is stationed. Gunnery Sergeant 'Big Mo' Molina grew up right here in Hawaii and has played rugby at the professional level throughout the world. Big Mo, would be the first to tell you that his full time job is being a Marine leader but he always finds time to expose his Marines and his local community to the game of rugby.

Please take time to remember those who came before us and faced overwhelming odds and still made a positive difference in the lives of others and build on the small successes of being part of your community.

Sergeant Major P. G. McKenna
Sergeant Major
U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES, PACIFIC



This month we recognize the Asian American and Pacific Islander people and the contributions they have made to our nation and our beloved Corps.

For more information on this Special Emphasis Month visit the following site:

<http://asianpacificheritage.gov/>

Master Sergeant M. C. Miller
Equal Opportunity Advisor
U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES, PACIFIC

Information

Department of Defense Directive 1020.02E
Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity in the Department of Defense
Enclosure 2, paragraph 2

The Department of Defense Military Equal Opportunity Program promotes equal opportunity as being critical to mission accomplishment, unit cohesiveness, and military readiness. It requires Service members to be evaluated only on individual merit, fitness, capability, and performance. It ensures all Service members are afforded equal opportunity in an environment free from harassment, including sexual harassment, and unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity), or sexual orientation.

Marine Corps Order P5354.1D w/ ch 1
Marine Corps Equal Opportunity Manual
Chapter 1, paragraph 1001

Unlawful discriminatory practices within the Marine Corps are counterproductive and unacceptable. Discrimination undermines morale, reduces combat readiness, and prevents maximum utilization and development of the Marine Corps' most vital asset, its "people". The policy of the Marine Corps is to provide equality of treatment and the opportunity for all Marines to achieve their full potential based solely upon individual merit, fitness, and ability.